

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/13/09 has been entered.

This communication is responsive to Amendment filed 10/13/09.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 10-22, 24-38, 40-41, 45-57, 59-70, 72, 74, 82-99 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 36 are independent claims.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Applicant's representative, Mr. Karl Rees, on October 21, 2009 and 12/18/09.

In the Specification

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Techniques for provisioning databases for users on a wide area network such as the Internet include a first party managing one or more database systems. Second parties subscribe to database services supported by the database systems managed by the first party. The first party provides, over a network, to database applications controlled by the second parties, access to the database services to which the second parties are subscribed. The database systems may use database appliances hosting both database process(es), and non-database process(es) tailored to the needs of the database process(es). A user is therefore able to obtain database resources from an Internet Database Service Provider (IDSP) without the user incurring the full costs of database administrator(s), dedicated database equipment facilities, or even dedicated database device(s), depending on usage. Meanwhile, the IDSP incurs minimum staffing loads because of various self-service tools. Costing model and automatic billing features are also described.

In the Claims

Cancel claims 83, 88, 91, 92

The application has been amended as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
a first party managing one or more database systems;
receiving from a plurality of second parties, information for subscribing to
database services supported by the one or more database systems
managed by the first party, wherein the database services include
services for storing and managing data provided by the second parties;
and

Art Unit: 2159

wherein the information is gathered during registration processes during which said second parties identify database resources, provided by the first party in support of said database services, for which the second parties are willing to pay;

providing, to database applications controlled by the second parties access to the database services to which the second parties are subscribed;

wherein the database applications controlled by the second parties interact with the one or more database systems managed by the first party by sending, to the one or more database systems, database commands that conform to a database language supported by the one or more database systems;

whereby the second parties use the database applications under their control, while the database applications send the database commands to the one or more database systems managed by the first party, thereby obviating the need for the second parties to manage the one or more database systems used by their database applications;

wherein execution of the database commands allows the second parties to manipulate data objects stored within at least one of the one or more database systems;

delivering to one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the second party to subscribe to said database services provided by said first party;

delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to access information in a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed; and the first party configuring a database device used to provide said database services as one of: (a) a dedicated device or (b) a plurality of virtual devices;

wherein the steps of receiving, providing, and delivering are performed by one or more computing devices.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein:
at least one of said second parties is an application service provider that provides application services to a plurality of third parties over a network; and
the step of providing access to the database services includes providing database services to an application used by said application service provider to provide said application services to said third parties.³
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
receiving over a network a request to perform a database management operation from a user associated with a particular second party of said plurality of second parties; and
responding to said request by performing said database management operation on one or more databases controlled by said first party without human intervention by said first party.

Art Unit: 2159

4. (cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing access includes providing access over a public network of computer networks.

6. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein the step of performing the database management operation involves allocating a different amount of resources to said particular second party than is currently allocated for said particular second party.

7. – 9. (cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the first party also provides database application services over a network; and

the method further comprises the step of delivering over the network, to a user

associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which

cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to

access a database application service to which said one of said second

parties has subscribed.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to specify or indicate changes to at least one of profile information, payment

Art Unit: 2159

information, and the selection of services to which said one of said second parties is subscribed.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to supply content for a subscribed database.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to develop a new database application.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to integrate an external service.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that present a status of a user subscribed resource selected from database resources managed by said first party.

Art Unit: 2159

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties,
one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user
interfaces that present the user with a user-selectable representation of a
web site building wizard for building a Web page with a database
component associated with an interface to a database;
receiving user input indicating the web site building wizard; and
executing said web site building wizard, including presenting a series of screens
to the user to prompt user input for building the Web page.
17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of the
first party updating the one or more database systems by receiving from a community
server over a network an update to the one or more database systems, wherein the
community server provides the update to a plurality of service providers over said
network.
18. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of the first party
sending to a community server a status of a user subscribed resource, wherein the user
subscribed resource is maintained by said first party.
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting to a
user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure

Art Unit: 2159

a the database device used to provide said database services as one of: a said dedicated device and a said plurality of virtual devices.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure at least one of a said dedicated device and a virtual device of a said plurality of virtual devices as one of a staging device available only to a database service developer for developing database services, and a production device for making database services available to a user who is not the database service developer.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, further comprising presenting a user interface for transferring an application from a staging device to a production device.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the step of delivering to one of said second parties one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the party to subscribe to said database services is performed as part of a registration process;

the interfaces include controls for receiving a user input value for a maximum amount of subscribed resources; and

the method further includes the step of presenting an alert if an amount of subscribed resources consumed by said party exceeds a threshold percentage of the maximum amount of subscribed resources.

Art Unit: 2159

23. (Canceled)

24. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the maximum amount of subscribed resources includes a maximum amount of at least one of

an amount of storage space,

a number of users connected to a platform in a period of time,

an amount of processor time used in a period of time, and

a number of transactions completed in a period of time.

25. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

presenting to the user a set of selectable sources of content;

receiving user input indicating a selected source; and

launching a source update process to connect to the selected source and update

a database with information received from the selected sources.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein

the user input indicating a selected source also indicates a schedule for updating

from the selected source; and

the source update process connects to the selected source according to the

schedule for updating from the selected source.

27. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

Art Unit: 2159

in response to user input that specifies that data should be loaded into a subscribed database, determining whether the subscribed database currently exists for said one of said second parties; and creating the subscribed database if the subscribed database does not currently exist for said one of said second parties.

28. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of: presenting representations of selectable application development kits; receiving user input indicating a selected development kit from the user; and launching a staging process including configuring consumable database resources on a staging database device, wherein a staging database device can be accessed by the user for developing the new database application and cannot be accessed by users associated with other parties of said plurality of second parties, receiving development input from the user; and building a new application on the staging database device based on the selected development kit and the development input.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, the step of developing the new database application further comprising the steps of after receiving user input indicating a selected development kit, determining whether a client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded to a computer of the user over a wide area network; and

if it is determined the client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded, downloading the client process to the computer of the user over the wide area network before the step of building the new application.

30. (original) The method of claim 28, the step of developing a new database application further comprising the steps of:

receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use; and

in response to receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use, launching a production transfer process including sending a request to the first party to transfer the new application to a production device on which the new application may be accessed by users who did not develop the new application.

31. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising integrating the external service, wherein the step of integrating comprises the steps of:

presenting a representation of a selectable external service;

receiving user input indicating a selected external service; and

launching an integration process to provide the external service to the user.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the selectable external service includes at least one of a payment service, a mobile Internet portal, an enterprise resource planning application, and a customer relationship management application.

Art Unit: 2159

33. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the first party performing at least one of the steps of:

- setting up database parameters;
- reporting database usage;
- backing up the database;
- upgrading the database;
- controlling database versions;
- implementing database security; and
- implementing data security within the database.

34. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- if a costing database does not already exist, then
- automatically creating the costing database of database resource usage by user,
- and
- initiating a costing model with price per unit of consumable resource per service;
- inserting data into the costing database based on actual use of database
- resources by the user;
- executing the costing model to compute a cost-per-user based on the data in the
- costing database and the price per unit of consumable resource per
- service; and
- billing the user for the cost computed by the costing model.

Art Unit: 2159

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the costing model supports:

- fixed price per unit of usage;
- variable price per unit usage as a function of usage;
- flat price up to a maximum value of usage;
- different prices for different users;
- different prices for different services; and
- different prices for increments of usage above a maximum subscribed usage.

36. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable storage media storing instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause:

- a first party managing one or more database systems;
- receiving from a plurality of second parties, information for subscribing to
 - database services supported by the one or more database systems
 - managed by the first party, wherein the database services include
 - services for storing and managing data provided by the second parties;
 - and

wherein the information is gathered during registration processes during which

- said second parties identify database resources, provided by the first party
- in support of said database services, for which the second parties are
- willing to pay;

providing, to database applications controlled by the second parties access to the

- database services to which the second parties are subscribed;

Art Unit: 2159

wherein the database applications controlled by the second parties interact with the one or more database systems managed by the first party by sending, to the one or more database systems, database commands that conform to a database language supported by the one or more database systems;

whereby the second parties use the database applications under their control,

while the database applications send the database commands to the one or more database systems managed by the first party, thereby obviating the need for the second parties to manage the one or more database systems used by their database applications;

wherein execution of the database commands allows the second parties to manipulate data objects stored within at least one of the one or more database systems;

delivering to one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the second party to subscribe to said database services provided by said first party;

delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to access information in a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed; and

the first party configuring a database device used to provide said database services as one of: (a) a dedicated device or (b) a plurality of virtual devices.

Art Unit: 2159

37. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36 wherein:

at least one of said second parties is an application service provider that provides application services to a plurality of third parties over a network; and the step of providing access to the database services includes providing database services to an application used by said application service provider to provide said application services to said third parties.

38. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36 further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

receiving over a network a request to perform a database management operation from a user associated with a particular second party of said plurality of second parties; and responding to said request by performing said database management operation on one or more databases controlled by said first party without human intervention by said first party.

39. (cancelled)

40. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36 wherein the step of providing access includes providing access over a public network of computer networks.

Art Unit: 2159

41. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 38 wherein the step of performing the database management operation involves allocating a different amount of resources to said particular second party than is currently allocated for said particular second party.

42.–44. (cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, wherein:

the first party also provides database application services over a network; and
the computer-readable medium further comprises instructions for performing the
step of delivering over the network, to a user associated with one of said
second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or
more user interfaces that allow the user to access a database application
service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed.

46. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to specify or indicate changes to at least one of profile information, payment information, and the selection of services to which said one of said second parties is subscribed.

Art Unit: 2159

47. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to supply content for a subscribed database.

48. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to develop a new database application.

49. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to integrate an external service.

50. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that present a status of a user subscribed resource selected from database resources managed by said first party.

Art Unit: 2159

51. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

delivering over a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties,
one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user
interfaces that present the user with a user-selectable representation of a
web site building wizard for building a Web page with a database
component associated with an interface to a database;
receiving user input indicating the web site building wizard; and
executing said web site building wizard, including presenting a series of screens
to the user to prompt user input for building the Web page.

52. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of the first party updating the one or more database systems by receiving from a community server over a network an update to the one or more database systems, wherein the community server provides the update to a plurality of service providers over said network.

53. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of the first party sending to a community server a status of a user subscribed resource, wherein the user subscribed resource is maintained by said first party.

Art Unit: 2159

54. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure a the database device used to provide said database services as one of: a said dedicated device and a said plurality of virtual devices.

55. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure at least one of a said dedicated device and a virtual device of a said plurality of virtual devices as one of a staging device available only to a database service developer for developing database services, and a production device for making database services available to a user who is not the database service developer.

56. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 55, further comprising instructions for presenting a user interface for transferring an application from a staging device to a production device.

57. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36 wherein:

the step of delivering to one of said second parties one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the party to

Art Unit: 2159

subscribe to said database services is performed as part of a registration process;

the interfaces include controls for receiving a user input value for a maximum amount of subscribed resources; and

the computer-readable medium further includes instructions for the step of presenting an alert if an amount of subscribed resources consumed by said party exceeds a threshold percentage of the maximum amount of subscribed resources.

58. (Canceled)

59. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 57, wherein the maximum amount of subscribed resources includes a maximum amount of at least one of

an amount of storage space,

a number of users connected to a platform in a period of time,

an amount of processor time used in a period of time, and

a number of transactions completed in a period of time.

60. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 47, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

presenting to the user a set of selectable sources of content;

receiving user input indicating a selected source; and

launching a source update process to connect to the selected source and update a database with information received from the selected sources.

61. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 60, wherein

the user input indicating a selected source also indicates a schedule for updating from the selected source; and

the source update process connects to the selected source according to the schedule for updating from the selected source.

62. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 47, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

in response to user input that specifies that data should be loaded into a

subscribed database, determining whether the subscribed database currently exists for said one of said second parties; and

creating the subscribed database if the subscribed database does not currently exist for said one of said second parties.

63. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 48, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

presenting representations of selectable application development kits;

receiving user input indicating a selected development kit from the user; and

launching a staging process including

Art Unit: 2159

configuring consumable database resources on a staging database device,
wherein a staging database device can be accessed by the user for
developing the new database application and cannot be accessed by
users associated with other parties of said plurality of second parties,
receiving development input from the user; and
building a new application on the staging database device based on the selected
development kit and the development input.

64. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of
claim 63, the step of developing the new database application further comprising the
steps of

after receiving user input indicating a selected development kit, determining
whether a client process of the selected development kit must be
downloaded to a computer of the user over a wide area network; and
if it is determined the client process of the selected development kit must be
downloaded, downloading the client process to the computer of the user
over the wide area network before the step of building the new application.

65. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of
claim 63, the step of developing a new database application further comprising the
steps of:

receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for
operational use; and

in response to receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use, launching a production transfer process including sending a request to the first party to transfer the new application to a production device on which the new application may be accessed by users who did not develop the new application.

66. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 49, further comprising instructions for integrating the external service, wherein the step of integrating comprises the steps of:

- presenting a representation of a selectable external service;
- receiving user input indicating a selected external service; and
- launching an integration process to provide the external service to the user.

67. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 66, wherein the selectable external service includes at least one of a payment service, a mobile Internet portal, an enterprise resource planning application, and a customer relationship management application.

68. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for the first party performing at least one of the steps of:

- setting up database parameters;
- reporting database usage;

Art Unit: 2159

backing up the database;
upgrading the database;
controlling database versions;
implementing database security; and
implementing data security within the database.

69. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

if a costing database does not already exist, then
automatically creating the costing database of database resource usage by user,
and
initiating a costing model with price per unit of consumable resource per service;
inserting data into the costing database based on actual use of database
resources by the user;
executing the costing model to compute a cost-per-user based on the data in the
costing database and the price per unit of consumable resource per
service; and
billing the user for the cost computed by the costing model.

70. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of claim 69, wherein the costing model supports:

fixed price per unit of usage;
variable price per unit usage as a function of usage;

Art Unit: 2159

flat price up to a maximum value of usage;
different prices for different users;
different prices for different services; and
different prices for increments of usage above a maximum subscribed usage.

71. (Canceled)

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein one of the plurality of second parties is an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

73. (Canceled)

74. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, where the step of receiving information includes receiving, from a particular second party, information that specifies one or more of:

a maximum amount of storage space of the database resources to be used by
the particular second party;

a maximum amount of users of the database resources to be used by the
particular second party;

a maximum transaction rate of the database resources to be used by the
particular second party;

a frequency of backup of the database resources to be used by the particular
second party;

a frequency and format of usage reports of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

Internet access parameters for mobile devices to be used by the particular second party;

a payment service for the database resources to be used by the particular second party; or

information about development of applications for the database resources to be used by the particular second party.

75.–81. (Canceled)

82. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the second parties control the source code of the database applications that the second parties use to send database commands to the database management systems managed by the first parties.

83. (Canceled)

84. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the second parties own said database applications.

85. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein one of the plurality of second parties is an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Art Unit: 2159

86. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, where the step of receiving information includes receiving, from a particular second party, information that specifies one or more of:

a maximum amount of storage space of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

a maximum amount of users of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

a maximum transaction rate of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

a frequency of backup of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

a frequency and format of usage reports of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;

Internet access parameters for mobile devices to be used by the particular second party;

a payment service for the database resources to be used by the particular second party; or

information about development of applications for the database resources to be used by the particular second party.

87. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein the second parties control the source code of the database

Art Unit: 2159

applications that the second parties use to send database commands to the database management systems managed by the first parties.

88. (Canceled)

89. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein the second parties own said database applications.

90. (Currently Amended) A The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

~~a first party managing a database system, wherein the database system~~

~~comprises one or more database servers and a plurality of database devices;~~

~~wherein the first party stores data in the plurality of database devices on~~

~~behalf of a plurality of subscribers, the plurality of subscribers~~

~~having provided said data;~~

~~receiving subscription information identifying a database resource for which a~~

~~second party has indicated a willingness to pay;~~

~~in response to the subscription information:~~

~~configuring a database device for the second party in the database system~~

~~managed by the first party; and~~

~~allocating at least one of the database resources at the database device;~~

~~receiving, at the database system, from a database application through which the~~

~~second party provides services based on data stored on behalf of the~~

~~second party at the database device, a database command to access the database device;~~
~~wherein the database command conforms to a database language supported by the database system; and~~
~~in response to the database command, the database system providing the database application with access to the database device;~~
~~wherein the steps of receiving the subscription information, configuring the database device, allocating the database resources, receiving the database command, and providing access are performed by one or more computing devices operated by the first party.~~

91.–92. (Canceled)

93. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~90~~1, wherein ~~the~~ at least one of said database applications is a database application hosted by the first party on behalf of the second party.

94. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~90~~1, wherein ~~the~~ at least one of said database applications is a database application hosted by the second party at a computing device connected to the database system via a network.

95. (Currently Amended) The one One or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, further storing instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause:

Art Unit: 2159

~~a first party managing a database system, wherein the database system comprises one or more database servers and a plurality of database devices;~~

~~wherein the first party stores data in the plurality of database devices on behalf of a plurality of subscribers, the plurality of subscribers having provided said data;~~

~~receiving subscription information identifying a database resource for which a second party has indicated a willingness to pay;~~

~~in response to the subscription information:~~

~~configuring a database device for the second party in the database system managed by the first party; and~~

~~allocating the database resource at the database device;~~

~~receiving, at the database system, from a database application through which the second party provides services based on data stored on behalf of the second party at the database device, a database command to access the database device;~~

~~wherein the database command conforms to a database language supported by the database system; and~~

~~in response to the database command, the database system providing the database application with access to the database device.~~

96.-97. (Canceled)

Art Unit: 2159

98. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim ~~95~~ 36, wherein ~~the~~ at least one of said database applications is a database application hosted by the first party on behalf of the second party.

99. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim ~~95~~ 36, wherein ~~the~~ at least one of said database applications is a database application hosted by the second party at a computing device connected to the database system via a network.

Statement of Reasons for Allowance

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 10-22, 24-38, 40, 41, 45-57, 59-70, 72, 74, 82, 84, 85-87, 89, 90, 93-95 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance.

The present invention is directed to a method for providing self-service database services to subscribers over the Internet.

All independent claims 1, 36 recite, or similarly recite, in combination with the remaining elements:

providing, to database applications controlled by the second parties access to the database services to which the second parties are subscribed;

wherein the database applications controlled by the second parties interact with the one or more database systems managed by the first party by sending, to the one or more database systems, database commands that conform to a database language supported by the one or more database systems;

whereby the second parties use the database applications under their control, while the database applications send the database commands to the one or more database systems managed by the first party, thereby obviating the need for the second parties to manage the one or more database systems used by their database applications;

Art Unit: 2159

wherein execution of the database commands allows the second parties to manipulate data objects stored within at least one of the one or more database systems;

delivering to one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the second party to subscribe to said database services provided by said first party;

delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of one or more user interfaces that allow the user to access information in a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed; and

the first party configuring a database device used to provide said database services as one of: (a) a dedicated device or (b) a plurality of virtual devices.

The closest prior art, Nolan et al (US 6,640,278), Donovan et al (US 6,012,032), Ng et al (US 6,374,256) and Laurent et al. (US 7,222,176) show similar methods for configuration and management of storage resources in a storage network. However, Nolan, Donovan, Ng, Laurent et al, singularly or in combination, still fail to anticipate or render the above cited limitations obvious.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Miranda Le whose telephone number is (571) 272-4112. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

Art Unit: 2159

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James K. Trujillo, can be reached at (571) 272-3677. The fax number to this Art Unit is 571-273-8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-2100.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Miranda Le/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2159